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SUBJECT: SECRETARY'S OFFICE OF GLOBAL WOMEN'S ISSUES GRANT PROPOSAL:
OMAN WOMEN'S RIGHTS SELF-HELP CLINIC

REF: STATE 012531

11. (U) SUMMARY: Post proposes the use the Secretary's Office of Global Women's Issues grant to create an Oman Women's Rights Self-Help Clinic. The Clinic would assist Omani women in using their substantial, yet little-known rights, particularly in the area of personal status law involving marriage, divorce and citizenship for their children. This proposal follows the guidelines set forth reftel.

12. (U) PROBLEM TO BE ADDRESSSED: Women in Oman are in need of an inexpensive and discreet venue to access information about their legal rights. Despite relatively strong rights set forth in Oman's Basic Law, recent statutes, and the U.N.'s Convention for the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) standards (an agreement to which Oman is a party), women and even public officials have limited knowledge about these rights. As a result, they often fall back on tradition or are guided by an influential individual's interpretation of Sharia. There are no legal clinics and no public or free legal resources for women in Oman. Recently, as a result of the Sultan's, other officials' and NGO's efforts to improve the status of women, the need for dissemination and application of women's rights information has been highlighted. Efforts to make this happen have failed or been delayed. Post expects this program to be the catalyst for action, demonstrating how to make these theoretical rights a reality.

13. (U) SUMMARY OF THE PROPOSED PROGRAM: This proposal is designed to create a legal clinic supported through a multi-media platform to address the critical need of women and girls in the Sultanate of Oman to understand and exercise their significant but little-used legal rights. The program plan and management would be completed by a team of Omani and American legal and women's rights specialists who have extensive experience with similar programs, including initiating, developing, and training volunteers for self-help clinics in the U.S., researching and writing plain language legal rights guides and working with Omani women's groups, the courts, and government officials.

14. (U) PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

(a) Phase One: Clinic Development. Six elements will be developed for preparation of opening the clinic:

(i.) women's NGO capacity bQii.) recruitment of an advisory board, consultants, volunteers, staff and referral specialists;

(iii.) legal research into developing plain language explanation of legal rights and process;

(iv.) volunteer and staff training in legal rights, analysis, action plan development and counseling;

(v.) establishing technology systems, telephone banks, and an

office for outreach and support;

(vi.) grant management and administrative support.

(b) Phase Two: Foundation Building. Ten steps will be taken to ensure that the clinic is successful prior to opening day:

(i.) develop a web site and other interactive media and communications tools;

(ii.) ascertain the frequently asked questions from focus groups and NGOs;

(iii.) initiate a free and paid media publicity campaign;

(iv.) initiate secondary Internet/social media and poster/flier publicity campaign;

(v.) meet with key government, judicial, legal, and healthcare leaders to explain the program and present sample legal education materials and action plans then respond to any feedback;

(vi.) meet and develop an MOU with the Royal Omani Police on

domestic violence issues;

(vii.) test website and volunteers with sample inquiries;

(viii.) develop a security plan to assure client confidentiality in all forms of record keeping;

(ix.) develop relations with pro bono attorneys and other organizations which will accept referrals;

(x.) carry out speaking engagements to Omani Women's Organizations and other civil societies/NGOs.

(c) Phase Three: Initiate Operations:

(i.) obtain free and paid publicity using sample statements of rights and action plans to both highlight the program and educate the public;

(ii.) engage social media;

(iii.) opQ a public event highlighting telephone services and empowering nature of self-help approach;

(iv.) launch a website highlighting interactive features and ability to download action plans, FAQs, links to other resources, and summaries of legal rights and key statutes;

(v.) continue training in law and counseling for volunteer lawyers and lay persons using actual cases received by phone and via web site and social media;

(vi.) continue developing research, action plans, and website content;

(vii.) recruit women who are trained in the law but are stay at home mothers to take cases and advise other volunteers remotely;

(viii.) recruit trained mediators.

(d) Phase Four: Operation. In the final phase the project will:

(i.) measure and evaluate inquiries and quality of the information given, as well as success rate of cases using the self-help approach;

(ii.) prepare and distribute statistical reports on types of initial inquiries/contacts and results;

(iii.) meet with government and NGOs working on lectures and

general women's education to report on needs to be addressed;

(iv.) evaluate status of referrals to mediation and pro bono attorneys;

(v.) prepare program, administrative, and fiscal reports for State Department review.

15. (U) BUDGET: The total amount requested is \$99,750 which is broken down as follows: (1) Salaries for clinical consultant and trainer, program manager/legal specialist, Omani women's-rights legal expert, paralegal, technology consultant, material developer/translator, legal research and editor, and legal rights counselors: \$70,300; (2) Administrative costs including office supplies, Internet and telephone service, and technology: \$6,500; (3) Publication costs: \$14,100; (4) Seminars, trainings, public meetings and material distribution, including lodging and travel expenses: \$8,850. Further details available upon request.

16. (U) DESCRIPTION OF RECIPIENT ORGANIZATION: GULF-AMERICAN LEGAL EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP INC.: The Gulf American Legal Partnership is dedicated to advancing legal education and reform in the Middle East and globally. It has extensive experience with rule of law, judicial reform, economic development, and educational exchange and training programs, includQrships with foreign universities and judicial training centers and design of innovative, multi-function, community resource centers. The Gulf American Legal Education Partnership is co-owned by Massachusetts attorneys Geraldine Heavey and Joseph McDonough. Gulf American Legal Education was created to assist the judiciary and legal systems in the MENA region. It is committed to helping judges and

other legal professionals become more independent, more confident, and more dedicated to modern rule of law principles while meeting the obligations of the global economy and internationally accepted human rights standards. Dr. McDonough has worked on various State Department MEPI programs. Both Dr. McDonough and Dr. Heavey live in Oman.
Schmierer